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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 71/NO. 44 NOVEMBER 26, 2007

INSIDE

Hurricane in Caribbean, Mexico: a massive social disaster

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Venezuela book fair theme: 'U.S., a possible revolution'

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

CARACAS, Venezuela, November 10—The first two days of the Third Venezuela International Book Fair have been marked by the expansion of literacy and popular access to culture in this country, as well as political debate sparked by the fair's theme, "United States: A possible revolution."

A wide variety of books are for sale—from poetry collections to histories of the struggles against Spanish colonial rule in South America, from cookbooks to titles on the place of the Cuban Revolution in the world today. Nearly 800 book presentations and artists' performances offer a place for working people and others to discuss literature, the arts, and politics. Almost 200 publishing houses are participating, including 148 from Venezuela.

"The rebirth of culture being celebrated here is especially significant considering all the books and bookstores that were burned during the years of the dictatorships in our countries," Alicia Castro, Argentina's ambassador to Venezuela, said at the opening ceremony. She was referring to the brutal military

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U.S.-Canada conference boosts defense of Cuban Five

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

TORONTO, Canada—Some 250 people attended a U.S.-Canada conference November 9-10 to step up the international campaign to win the release of five Cuban revolutionaries being unjustly held in U.S. jails. The event was organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba, La Table de Concertation de Solidarité Quebec-Cuba, and the U.S.-based National Network on Cuba.

"This is an important moment in our case and we are certain that we always can count on you," wrote Ramón Labañino, one of the Cuban Five, as they are known, in a message he sent to the conference. "This is a political case and it can only be won through international solidarity."

The five Cubans—Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González—have been locked up since their arrest in 1998. They were convicted in a 2001 federal trial in Miami for "conspiracy to commit espionage" and other frame-up charges, and are serving sentences ranging from 15 years to a double life term.

The five were in the United States to gather information on Cuban counterrevolutionary groups that have orga-

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Pakistani gov't bars protests, jails unionists

U.S.: Musharraf 'indispensable' in 'war on terror'

Asif Hassan/AFP/Getty Images

Journalists protest November 12 in Karachi, Pakistan, against ban on media that is part of martial law imposed by U.S.-backed Musharraf government.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

November 13—A week after imposing a state of emergency, Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf gave his government's army and secret police sweeping new powers against civilians November 11. He said martial law would remain in force until elections are held in January. Security forces placed opposition leader Benazir Bhutto under house arrest to undercut protests.

On November 3 Musharraf suspended Pakistan's constitution, dissolved the Supreme Court, arrested

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Workers in Oklahoma rally against anti-immigrant law

BY STEVE WARSHELL

HOUSTON—More than 500 people, many of them Mexican-born workers, rallied November 2 at the Oklahoma state capitol in Oklahoma City, chanting *"Justicia, Justicia"* and other slogans in Spanish to protest the state's sweeping new anti-immigrant law.

The law makes it a crime to transport, harbor, hide, rent housing to, or employ undocumented immigrants. It also gives state police the powers of immigration cops, and requires local and state cops and county jails to verify legal status. The law also terminates, in most cases, government subsidies such as health care and welfare for those who cannot prove legal status.

Miguel Rivera, president of the Oklahoma immigrant rights coalition Conlamic, told protesters at the rally that already the first arrest under the law had been made, with a woman charged for giving a ride to her boyfriend in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who allegedly lacks residency documents. Rivera said some immigrants have already been evicted from their apartments by landlords afraid of being in violation of the new law.

Final push in sub drive!

BY CINDY JAQUITH

November 14—With six days remaining in the fall circulation campaign, we have garnered 2,097 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 91 percent of the international goal. Campaigners in every area are making the final push to reach their local quotas in order to make this a successful effort.

There is a tie for top sub seller this week. Deborah Liatos and Bernie Senter, both from Miami, each sold 12 subs. This was a big week for Miami partisans of the *Militant*, who took part in the Miami Book Fair International, where they

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Also Inside:

Democratic rights protests greet int’l forum in Tonga



Antimonarchy protesters’ banner in Tonga during October 16–17 Pacific Islands Forum

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—“New Zealand and Australia indirectly support dictatorship,” stated fighters for democratic rights in Tonga, in a banner they flew during the Pacific Islands Forum held there October 16–17.

The forum is made up of government representatives from New Zealand and Australia, both imperialist powers, and the 14 Pacific Island nations they dominate. Activists used the event to publicize their long-standing fight against Tonga’s monarchy.

Banned from rallying in Nuku’alofa, the capital, about 100 protesters gathered on the town’s outskirts for four days, hanging banners along the road to the forum site. Finau Tutone, the president of the Friendly Islands Teachers Association and a leader of the protest, told reporters, “All the problems here are because of the system. There is no accountability to the people.”

Tonga’s monarchy dominates political and economic life in the nation of 117,000 people. Only 9 of the 33 members of parliament are elected by popular vote—15 are appointed by King Siaosi Tupou V and 9 are selected by representatives of the country’s 33 noble families.

In the face of a deep-going popular movement in recent years—including strikes, demonstrations, and a street rebellion in Nuku’alofa last year—Prime Minister Feleti Sevele has proposed elections in 2010 for a new parliament with 17 seats elected by popular vote. Four others would be appointed by the king, and nine seats would remain reserved for the nobles, a hereditary layer numbering about 1,500 people.

Akilisi Pohiva, an opponent of the monarchy who serves in the legislative assembly, told the *Sydney Morning Herald*, “We are moving forward, but there are still issues to be resolved, and that is why we are here.”

Pohiva and four other elected People’s Representatives still face charges of sedition brought by the government following the rebellion last November, in which eight people died and parts of Nuku’alofa were destroyed. Their trial has been set for August of next year.

Essential painkillers scarce in semicolonial nations

BY CHAUNCEY ROBINSON

There is an enormous disparity in access to painkillers between semicolonial nations and the imperialist world. This gap means millions of people with AIDS, cancer, and other severe illnesses unnecessarily suffer pain and degradation that could be minimized with morphine or other analgesics routinely used in the most economically developed world.

About 40 percent of services in Africa dedicated to reducing pain for patients with prolonged incurable diseases, known as palliative care, face shortages of morphine or its equivalents. The shortages run 35 percent in Latin America and 25 percent in Asia. In Africa 20 percent of all palliative care specialists have no access to morphine or other strong painkillers, and 25 percent lack weaker drugs such as codeine.

These figures come from a recent report, “Access to pain relief—An essential human right,” issued by Help the Hospices, a British charity that trains hospice workers and gives support to hospices in semicolonial countries.

Profits and drug availability

Medical specialists surveyed in the report attributed the shortages to restrictive national drug laws, fear of addiction, poor national health-care systems, and lack of knowledge by doctors, patients, and government officials. All these factors, of course, are connected to the fact that health care and pharmaceuticals are a lucrative business worldwide.

One doctor in Ecuador quoted in the report remarked, “Drug companies are not willing to import oral morphine solution as they will not make enough profit due to spending months on legal papers.”

A doctor in Bangladesh said, “It is simply irrational that oral morphine is not available in the country whereas expensive fentanyl patches can be made available for the rich patients.”

According to figures gathered by a United Nations agency, six imperialist countries—the United States, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Australia—consume 79 percent of the world’s morphine, an effective and relatively cheap painkiller. Countries in the semicolonial world, where 80 percent of the world’s population live, consume about 6 percent.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 6 million people a year suffering chronic pain from cancer or late-stage AIDS receive inadequate treatment. Millions more go untreated for other causes of lingering pain.

Restrictive national laws are compounded by the broader social problems facing countries oppressed by imperialism. In the West African nation of Sierra Leone, for example, morphine may be legally handled only by a pharmacist or doctor, not a nurse. But there are only about 100 doctors in the country—one per 54,000 people.

The capitalist priority on profits is also responsible for the lack of access to malaria drugs and AIDS treatment for millions of people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Contrast with revolutionary Cuba

Is this social catastrophe inevitable? No. Revolutionary Cuba shows the difference it makes when working people run society, putting human needs first, not profits for a few.

Before the 1959 revolution Cuba’s health-care system was largely a privilege for those with money. After workers and farmers took power and overturned capitalist rule, they carried out a socialist revolution.

As a result, in Cuba health care is free, high-quality, and accessible to all. Also contributing to Cubans’ overall well-being were: a campaign that wiped out illiteracy, an agrarian reform giving land

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Farmer Evaristo Marufo talks to *Militant* reporters in Venezuela October 20.

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Australia: Send A$50 to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.
Pacific Islands: Send NZ$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Caribbean hurricane: massive social disaster

Cuba sends volunteer doctors to Mexico

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

November 12—Hundreds of thousands of people in the Caribbean and in Mexico have been devastated in the wake of Tropical Storm Noel in southern Mexico and in the Caribbean, especially the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Nearly 150 people are dead and dozens missing in the two counties. Heavy rains also led to deaths in Mexico, Nicaragua, the Bahamas, and Jamaica.

The consequences of the storm and flooding are compounded by the social conditions resulting from the imperialist domination of those countries, such as inadequate health care and lack of infrastructure to deal with a storm of this magnitude.

By contrast, in Cuba only one person died as a result of the flooding, Reuters reported, despite massive storm damage in eastern Granma province. About 68,000 people were evacuated into well-stocked government shelters in that country. Volunteers have taken preventive measures to avoid the spread of disease in areas where flooding killed livestock.

Of the nearly 67,000 people displaced in the Dominican Republic, only 23,000 are in shelters. According to a November 4 UN report, the shelters lack food and other relief supplies. Hospitals are at capacity.

A week after the rains stopped, 137 Dominican communities remain isolated. Food shortages and a subsequent rise in prices are expected as a result of crop destruction. Water contamination stemming from dead animals and the collapse of sewage systems raises the likelihood of a rapid spread of disease. Forty percent of the country's water supply was damaged.

In Haiti, rains from Noel compounded flooding that has wrecked much of the country since September. Many shelters lack drinking water, sanitary conditions, and basic health services. Haiti is particularly vulnerable to flooding and mudslides because of extensive deforestation, caused by the fact that, without access to electricity, many rural toilers depend on charcoal made from chopping down trees.

Residents of the working-class area of Cité Soleil outside Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, blocked roads and burned tires November 5 demanding aid. Intolerable conditions at shelters were also reported in Mexico, where nearly two-thirds of the state of Tabasco was under water a week after the rains stopped. Some 900 people crowded into a school in Villahermosa, the capital of Tabasco, for shelter.

"The authorities sent us only enough food for 300 people," shelter supervisor Hortensia Carmona told the local newspaper *Hoy*. "There is no medicine. It's terrible."

In the neighboring state of Chiapas, a mudslide buried the entire village of San Juan Grijalva November 5. Altogether, 19 people are reported dead and one million people affected by the storm in southern Mexico.

Washington and other imperialist powers have given minimal aid. U.S. officials pledged $300,000 in emergency assistance to Mexico, and sent National Guard airplanes and crews to the Dominican Republic. Ottawa promised $553,000 for Haiti.

The Venezuelan government donated 500 prefabricated houses, diesel fuel, and three planeloads of food and medicine.

Despite the economic toll of the flooding in Cuba, the revolutionary government there is sending 50 doctors to Tabasco. About 600 Cuban volunteer doctors are already serving in Haiti, and dozens in the Dominican Republic. In addition, 305 Haitians have been trained as doctors free of charge in Cuba, and another 240 are in their final year of medical school there.

NOW joins Tacoma immigrant rights vigil



Militant/John Naubert

TACOMA, Washington—Participants in the National Organization for Women (NOW) Women of Color and Allies conference joined immigrant rights activists November 10 at the monthly protest outside the Northwest Detention Center here. According to the protest organizer, more than 1,000 immigrant workers are locked up in this prison.

—MARY MARTIN

Pakistan gov't bars protests, detains unionists

Continued from front page

hundreds of opposition leaders, and shut down non-state news organizations. The numbers in jail now are estimated at 15,000, among them prominent trade unionists.

U.S. deputy secretary of state John Negroponte reiterated Washington's support for the Pakistani dictator November 7, telling reporters that "President Musharraf has been indispensable in the global war on terror" and that partnership with his regime was the "only option."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged Musharraf to lift the state of emergency "as soon as possible" and praised him for moving up the election date from February as he had announced just days earlier.

While trying to take some distance from the latest crackdown, the U.S. rulers are hesitant to dump Musharraf, a key ally in their "war on terror," since there is no clear replacement that could guarantee a stable regime.

Musharraf seized power in a 1999 military coup. Initially he was a protector of the Taliban-led regime in neighboring Afghanistan. When Washington seized on the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to step up its war drive in South Asia and the Mideast, Musharraf jumped on the bandwagon and became a staunch U.S. war ally. Since then, the Pakistani army has carried out joint operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. U.S. military aid to Pakistan has been about $80 million a month.

Under the new decrees, the Pakistani army "can interrogate civilians suspected of targeting military personnel and installations. Their cases could be sent to the military courts," the Indo-Asian News Service reported. The political police are authorized to "detain civilians without framing any charges and keep them in custody for an indefinite period." The military can try individuals accused of making "statements conducive to public mischief."

On November 12 the government barred the opposition from holding a car caravan from the city of Lahore to Islamabad to protest the military crackdown. The action had been called by Bhutto, former prime minister and leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

Three days earlier, Bhutto was placed under house arrest and police blocked a PPP rally against martial law in Rawalpindi.

Several opposition parties have said they will boycott the January elections if the state of emergency is still in effect. Bhutto, whose party is the largest capitalist party in the opposition, told reporters November 11 the door was still open for negotiations between her and Musharraf. Two days later she called for the resignation of the increasingly unpopular president.

After an exile of eight years, Bhutto returned to Pakistan in October in a deal backed by Washington. Musharraf dropped corruption charges against her, and Bhutto agreed to oppose an election boycott planned by the other bourgeois parties. "The United States hopes the pair—who both stress fighting militancy—might share power after the elections," a November 12 Reuters dispatch noted.

While opposing Musharraf's state of emergency, which curbs her party's activities, Bhutto has not opposed Washington's "war on terror," including the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan and military operations on the Pakistani border. Rather, she has argued that U.S. funds are being wasted on Musharraf because he is unable to effectively prosecute the war.

In an op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* last March Bhutto put herself forward as the "democratic" candidate to be Washington's ally in the region, arguing that "Pakistan's return to democracy is essential to America's success in South and Central Asia, as well in the Middle East, as democratization is an integral part of fighting terrorism."

Unionists and others rounded up

Amnesty International reported November 12 that five individuals who spoke out against the state of emergency have been accused of treason, which carries a maximum penalty of death. Two of the five are leaders of the Baluchi nationality, Ayub Qureshi and Hasil Bizenjo.

Also arrested were Farid Awan, general secretary of the All-Pakistan Trade Union Federation; Liaquat Ali Sahi, a leader of the trade union at the State Bank of Pakistan; and Yusuf Masti Khan, vice-president of the National Workers Party.

Manzoor Razi, central president of the Railways Workers Federation, was arrested with other protesters at a demonstration in Karachi. Mohammad Ashiq Bhutta, information secretary of the National Federation of Food, Beverages and Tobacco Workers union, was detained briefly.

Labor protests have been on the rise in recent years, especially against moves by the Musharraf regime to privatize state-owned companies and fire thousands of workers in the process. The government has announced plans to throw 29,000 telephone workers into the street when it sells off the Pakistan Telecommunication Company.

On November 2, hundreds of workers at Pakistan International Airlines went on strike over demands for higher wages. By November 3, only 25 percent of the company's flights took off. The strike ended the day martial law was imposed.

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Two classes on *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution, 1983–87*. Class one, Sat., Nov. 17, 4 p.m. Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party. Class two, Sun., Nov. 18, 10:30 a.m. Speaker: Ben Joyce, Young Socialists. Donation: $2 each class. *307 W 36 St. (near 8th Ave.), 10th Fl North. Tel: (212) 629-6649.*

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The October 1917 Russian Revolution: Its Relevance for Working People Today. Speakers: Ma'mud Shirvani, Doug Nelson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 17. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *307 W 36 St. (near 8th Ave.), 10th Fl North. Tel: (212) 629-6649.*

Join YS at December 1-2 political meetings in N.Y.!

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel.: (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY MAURA DELUCA

NEW YORK—Join Young Socialists from around the United States and beyond in attending a national public meeting on Saturday, December 1 in New York City, sponsored by the New York City and Newark Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists.

The featured speakers will include Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New International* magazine and *Our History Is Still Being Written*, recently back from China and Venezuela.

The presentations will explain the real perspective that U.S. imperialism offers working people and youth today—from economic devastation to expanding wars worldwide—and the perspective of building a revolutionary working-class movement in this country. They will describe the ongoing transformation of vanguard layers of the working class in the United States, and the participation of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists in that process.

The speakers will take up the living example of the Cuban Revolution and its impact on working people and youth internationally, as seen in the response to the example of the three generals in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces who are of Chinese background: Gustavo Chui, Armando Choy, and Moisés Sío Wong. Their stories show how rebellious youth in Cuba from different backgrounds joined the fight led by a proletarian movement to change social relations completely, from the dog-eat-dog nature of capitalism to a society based on human solidarity. Both before and after the program there will be opportunities to meet young socialists and socialist workers from all over.

The following day, Sunday, December 2, at 10:00 a.m., there will be a gathering for those who would like to continue the discussion or ask questions on what was presented at the public meeting. Then at 1:00 p.m., there will be a national meeting of the Young Socialists, where perspectives for upcoming political activity and education will be planned and voted on.

This weekend will be a prime opportunity for young people interested in learning about revolutionary working-class politics and in joining the fight to eradicate capitalism and all its social ills. Join us this weekend—and beyond!

For details on the December 1–2 events, see the ad on the front page.

Maura DeLuca is a member of the Young Socialists in New York.



Militant/Eddie Beck

Young Socialists contingent marches in January 27 demonstration in Washington, D.C., to demand "Bring the troops home from Iraq now!"

Final push in sub campaign

Continued from front page

sold 31 subscriptions and 131 books on revolutionary politics.

Ellen Brickley reports that their biggest selling title at the fair was *The Communist Manifesto*, with 12 copies sold. Also popular was Pathfinder's newly released *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution, 1983–87.* The French edition of the book was also sold at the booth of Libreri Mapou, a Haitian bookstore. Pathfinder supporters also did a presentation on the book at the Francophone Pavilion.

Chicago campaigners sold five subscriptions and $250 in books and pamphlets at the Latino Book and Family Festival, including three copies of the new edition of *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* and two of *We Are the Heirs of the World's Revolutions*, both by Thomas Sankara.

Nine subscriptions were sold by a team in Seattle that attended a Northwest Women of Color and Allies conference in Tacoma, Washington. The event was sponsored by the National Organization for Women and hosted by the Korean Women's Association.

New *Militant* subbers have been an important part of the drive. This past week in New York a Hunter College student active in the fight against police brutality requested subscription blanks so he could help sign up new readers. He came back with four new subscriptions from friends in his neighborhood.

Participants in a U.S.-Canada conference held in Toronto to win freedom for the Cuban Five bought 14 subscriptions to the *Militant.* Twelve of those also took advantage of a special discount offer for the new edition of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* when purchased with a *Militant* subscription.

Fall 'Militant' Subscription Drive
Sept. 29 – Nov. 18 ♦ Week 6 of 7

Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	**80**	**79**	**99%**
Edinburgh	**50**	**45**	**90%**
UK Total	**130**	**124**	**95%**
CANADA*	**125**	**103**	**82%**
UNITED STATES			
Des Moines, IA*	**145**	**139**	**96%**
Washington, DC*	**160**	**151**	**94%**
Philadelphia	**105**	**98**	**93%**
Newark, NJ*	**130**	**120**	**92%**
Pittsburgh*	**65**	**60**	**92%**
Chicago*	**90**	**81**	**90%**
San Francisco*	120	**108**	**90%**
Seattle*	100	**87**	**87%**
New York*	315	**272**	**86%**
Miami*	140	**120**	**86%**
Houston*	90	**76**	**84%**
Los Angeles*	100	**80**	**80%**
Boston	60	**46**	**77%**
Twin Cities*	130	**98**	**75%**
Denver*	**12**	**9**	**75%**
Atlanta*	**135**	**95**	**70%**
CARROLLTON, GA	**135**	**94**	**70%**
Albany, NY	20	**11**	**55%**
U.S. Total	**2052**	**1745**	**85%**
NEW ZEALAND*	**65**	**61**	**94%**
SWEDEN	30	**26**	**87%**
AUSTRALIA*	45	**38**	**84%**
Int'l totals	**2447**	**2097**	**91%**
Should be	**2300**	**1971**	**86%**
*Raised goal			

Successful Fund event in Georgia

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Supporters of the *Militant* are set to push over the next two weeks to successfully complete the campaign to raise $100,000 for the socialist newsweekly by the November 28 deadline. This week $15,664 came in, bringing the total collected thus far to $70,499.

Pledges for the campaign remain $725 short of the international goal, so supporters in every area need to discuss how they can surpass their local quotas. Areas that are ahead of schedule should consider raising their targets.

Militant supporters raised $900 at a November 10 fund event in Carrollton, Georgia, reports Susan Lamont. It was the first Militant Labor Forum in this area in west Georgia, attended by 30 people.

The speakers were Ellie Garcia, a worker at a nearby sewing plant; Wesley Lewis, a Young Socialist in Atlanta; and Rey Ruiz, a warehouse worker originally from Honduras.

Ruiz, one of the top *Militant* subscription-sellers in the area, told the audience, "The *Militant* is not funded by the ruling class—it is funded by us, the working people. That's why it's important to support the fund and distribute the paper, so it reaches the furthest corners of the country. Because wherever it reaches, it educates working people."



Militant/Nick Gruenberg

Young Socialist Wesley Lewis speaking November 10 at public meeting for 'Militant' Fund in Carrollton, Georgia.

During the discussion period, Ilsa Hernández, who owns a small restaurant and store and has lived in the United States for 16 years, described how for weeks immigration cops have come through the area, claiming to be looking for criminals. "They don't even find one, but they're arresting thousands of people," Hernández said. She asked to have a small bundle of *Militants* dropped off at her restaurant every week for her customers.

In San Diego, *Militant* supporters raised $730 in contributions and another $100 in pledges at a house meeting, reports Wendy Lyons. Contributors there heard a report on the political work of the Socialist Workers Party in the area and plans for distribution of the *Militant.*

To make a contribution, contact local distributors listed on page 8 or send checks, payable to the *Militant*, to the address listed on page 2.

$100,000 'Militant' Fund Drive
Sept. 29 – Nov. 25 ♦ Week 6 of 8

Country	Quota	Paid	%
AUSTRALIA	**1,400**	**1,420**	**101%**
FRANCE	**250**	**238**	**95%**
CANADA	**4,100**	**3,471**	**85%**
NEW ZEALAND	**3,000**	**2,486**	**83%**
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	**600**	**667**	**111%**
London	1,500	1,009	67%
UK total	**2,100**	**1,676**	**77%**
UNITED STATES			
Philadelphia*	**4,300**	**3,770**	**88%**
Los Angeles*	**9,000**	**7,673**	**85%**
Miami	**3,000**	**2,510**	**84%**
New York	**15,000**	**11,540**	**77%**
San Francisco	11,000	8,135	74%
Des Moines, IA	2,000	1,440	72%
Newark, NJ	3,500	2,418	69%
Chicago*	7,000	4,795	69%
Seattle	7,000	4,777	68%
Boston	2,800	1,798	64%
Carrollton, GA	4,500	2,872	64%
Atlanta	4,500	2,592	58%
Twin Cities	4,700	2,655	56%
Washington, D.C.	2,800	1,285	46%
Pittsburgh	3,500	1,500	43%
Houston	3,000	1,105	37%
Albany, NY	125	40	32%
U.S. total	87,725	60,905	69%
SWEDEN	700	303	43%
Intl'l totals	**99,275**	**70,499**	**71%**
Goal/Should be	**100,000**	**75,000**	**75%**
*** Raised goal**			

London pushes imperialist campaign vs. Zimbabwe

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—Prime minister Gordon Brown says the British government will boycott a December summit of the European Union (EU) and the African Union if Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe, is present. Brown is also urging the EU to strengthen its sanctions against Zimbabwe and calling for an EU envoy to assess "human rights abuses" by the Mugabe government.

Formerly the British colony known as Rhodesia, Zimbabwe won its independence in 1980. Since 2002, London, Washington, and other imperialist centers have targeted Zimbabwe with economic and travel sanctions, allegedly because of the lack of democracy there. In reality, they want to see a regime there that will be pliant to their interests.

In September, the Mugabe government enacted a new "indigenization and economic empowerment" law that calls for foreign owners to hand over 51 percent of their companies to "indigenous" Zimbabweans, including whites "disadvantaged by the colonial system." This is the latest in a series of measures against wealthy whites and foreign interests taken by the Mugabe regime, which the imperialist powers have seized on in their anti-Mugabe campaign.

Land question

Land reform is desperately needed in Zimbabwe to uproot the legacy of colonial rule. In 2000, Mugabe ordered the seizure of land owned by several thousand wealthy white farmers who dominated agriculture while 6 million Black farmers were landless.

But the land grab was bureaucratic. Much of the land was handed over to officials and supporters of the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF).

Concerning the new "indigenization" law, government minister Paul Mangwana said it "is about the total liberation of Zimbabwe." Such official demagogy is designed to deflect opposition to the government's responsibility for the spiraling collapse of the economy. On occasion it's combined with antiwhite rhetoric. Mugabe told a ZANU-PF conference in 2000, "Our party must continue to strike fear in the hearts of the white man, our real enemy."

Since 1999, Zimbabwe's gross domestic product has contracted by one-third. Gold production plummeted by 44 percent from 1996 to 2006. The annual inflation rate has been running at more than 1,000 percent and more than half the working population is unemployed. According to United Nations statistics, life expectancy is 34 years for women and 37 for men.

The agricultural ministry says that the wheat harvest is one-third of what is required and the World Food Programme estimates that some 3 million people will need food aid in the coming months. During protests against food price rises in 1998, government forces killed eight workers and arrested 2,300.

This year, leaders of the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), were arrested and beaten by the police. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai supports the sanctions against Zimbabwe and has the backing of some imperialist governments.

Mugabe's foreign policy has sometimes come into conflict with British imperialism's goals in Africa. For example, London opposed Zimbabwe's military intervention in the Congo war. At one point, Harare deployed 10,000 troops aimed at propping up the Laurent Kabila government.

Zimbabwe was also key to the detention of a group of British businessmen and mercenaries, with connections to ruling-class figures in the United Kingdom, who were involved in an attempted coup against the government of oil-rich Equatorial Guinea.

Foreign investment down

Foreign investment in Zimbabwe tumbled to $5 million in 2001, down from $436 million three years earlier. Mugabe turned to China in what is officially known as the "Look East" policy. Trade with China surged to $280 million in the first eight months of 2006, although it has slowed somewhat since. China is today Zimbabwe's biggest overseas investor.

Concern over China's growing presence in Africa is a factor in the EU's African Union summit in December. The EU is split by the British government's proposal to boycott the meeting if Mugabe attends. The Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and the Netherlands have voiced support for the boycott; Germany and Portugal are against it.

The presidents of South Africa and Zambia have said that they will not attend the summit if Mugabe is excluded.

Construction workers strike in Dubai



Getty Images

November 9—Some 40,000 construction workers in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), have been on strike since November 1 in a revolt over brutal working conditions and low and delayed pay. Shown above are strikers on their apartment balconies in the Sonapur labor camp, on the city's outskirts. The workers, who receive between $109 and $163 a month, are demanding a $55 raise. The immigrant workforce, the majority from India and other South Asian countries, are employed by Arabtec, Dubai's largest construction company. Strikers have stood up to government threats to deport them. Strikes are illegal in the UAE, which relies on immigrants for most industrial and service jobs.

—DOUG NELSON

Painkillers in Third World

Continued from page 2

to small farmers, the nationalization of industry and a planned economy, and measures to uproot racist discrimination and the second-class status of women.

Today Cuba has 66,000 physicians and a total of 350,000 health-care workers in a nation of 11 million. Cubans have one family doctor per 180 people. There is a medical school in every province.

Cuba has reduced infant mortality to 5.3 per 1,000 live births—the lowest rate in Latin America. (In the United States, infant mortality is 6.8, and for African American females it is 13.6 per 1,000 live births.)

These achievements are despite Washington's nearly 50-year-long economic embargo, which denies Cuba medicines and equipment that contain U.S.-manufactured or -patented components.

Cuba has tens of thousands of volunteer doctors and other medical personnel providing free, quality care in more than 100 countries. They often work in the most remote areas where other doctors will not go.

Cubans are also training doctors in other countries, and thousands of youth from around the world have received scholarships to study at the Latin American School of Medicine in Cuba in order to go back to their own countries and provide medical care to those who would otherwise not receive it.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

November 26, 1982

In new fighting that began November 1, Iranian forces have succeeded in regaining more than 200 square miles of territory occupied by Iraqi units since Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980.

The original aim of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, when he launched the invasion of Iran, was to topple the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini and weaken the Iranian revolution. Hussein feared the impact the anti-imperialist upsurge of the Iranian people could have on the toilers of Iraq and other Arab countries.

But the Iranian people have rallied to defend their revolution. The Iraqi occupiers have now been driven from virtually all the Iranian territory that they had captured in the early weeks of the war. Hussein's own regime is growing more shaky.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

November 25, 1957

Events in Little Rock show that the government intends to do the least it can get away with to enforce Negro civil rights. It is attempting to retreat from the scene as hastily as possible, to the delight of the racist mobsters. No confidence can be placed in the capitalist government to defend Negro school children in Little Rock or anywhere else. The only reliable and effective defense of civil rights can be the mass organization and mobilization of labor and the Negro people.

The labor bureaucracy's inaction on Little Rock in reality reflects high policy. The AFL-CIO is politically in coalition with the Democratic Party. What makes the default of the union bureaucrats so criminal is that the fate of the labor movement and the Negro people depends on labor's actions in combating Jim Crow.

THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

November 26, 1932

Another pillar—albeit a very diminutive one—of the rotting structure of the Stalinist system has just fallen. In Des Moines a good half of the membership—11 to 12—are in revolt against lies and bureaucracy. They refuse to be bullied or terrorized, insist upon their rights, are studying the cause of the Left Opposition calmly and objectively. A few others are in the process of becoming convinced but all vigorously protest bureaucracy and demand our reinstatement into the party. Already we two, Barach and Gottlieb, have been expelled.

The unit meeting of Sept. 19 admitted us. The following evening a special unit meeting was called by the City Central, out of which we were violently ejected. Ten other members, protesting this use of violence and bureaucracy, walked out.

Venezuela book fair: ‘U.S., a possible revolution’

Continued from front page

regimes that dominated much of Latin America during parts of the 1960s and ‘70s. Argentina is the country of honor at this year’s fair.

Reflecting the Venezuelan government’s programs to preserve the languages and cultures of indigenous peoples, the inaugural ceremony was kicked off by a children’s choir that sang the national anthem in the language of the Anu people. Minister of Culture Francisco Sesto and Vice President Jorge Rodríguez were the featured speakers. Rodríguez described the expansion of publishing and book distribution in Venezuela in recent years, and the literacy campaign that has taught more than one million workers and peasants to read and write.

‘United States: A possible revolution’

Ramón Medero, president of the National Book Center, welcomed the many activists for social change participating in the fair, especially those from the United States. He also introduced the fair’s theme, “United States: A possible revolution.” Noting that the fair’s central activity is a five-day rolling forum on that topic, Medero pointed to the importance of the fact that participants will be discussing “not just whether a revolution is necessary in North America, but that it is possible.”



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Carolina Alvarez of Venezuelan publisher Monte Avila holds new edition of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, just released by Monte Avila. Right, sign cites book fair theme, “U.S., a possible revolution.” Statue of Liberty is holding book with Malcolm X on the cover. (These photos will appear in color at www.themilitant.com.)

Discussion and debate around this question has marked every aspect of the book fair’s opening days. Some 20 writers and political activists, most from the United States, are scheduled to give presentations and participate in the broad-ranging discussion with different audiences each day. Panelists will include Bernardo Alvarez, Venezuela’s ambassador to the United States; Amiri Baraka, a writer and poet active since the 1960s in Black nationalist and Maoist circles; Charles Hardy, a former Maryknoll priest who has lived in Venezuela for many years; Puerto Rican independence fighter Héctor Pesquera of the Hostos National Independence Movement (MINH); Luis Rodriguez, a Chicano activist and author of *Always Running*; Jimmy Massey, a former Marine and founder of Iraq Veterans Against the War; Richard Gott, British author and journalist; University of Minnesota political science professor August Nimtz; former University of Colorado professor Ward Churchill; and Lee Sustar, editor of the *Socialist Worker* newspaper, which reflects the views of the International Socialist Organization.

The forum opened November 10, attended by 150 people. The panelists at the morning session were Mary-Alice Waters, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and president of Pathfinder Press, and Eva Golinger, a Venezuelan American lawyer and author of *The Chávez Code* and *Bush vs. Chávez*.

The afternoon panelists were U.S.-born journalist Chris Carlson, a regular contributor to the website www.venezuelaanalysis.com, and Tufara Waller, coordinator of the cultural program of the Highlander Center in Tennessee and director of the We Shall Overcome project. Their remarks and the subsequent discussion from the floor opened a debate on several of the most sharply contested issues.

“I am speaking as part of a small minority, even among those who call themselves leftists or revolutionaries, a minority that says without hesitation or qualification, ‘Yes, a revolution *is* possible in the United States.’ Socialist revolution,” said Waters, the opening speaker. “Not only is revolution possible in the United States, but revolutionary struggle by working people is inevitable, initiated not at first by the toilers but forced by the crisis-driven assaults of the propertied classes.”

Waters said she was addressing those who consider socialist revolution in the United States to be impossible, “a utopian dream.” Such a conclusion, she said, has to rest on the assumption “that the coming decades are going to look more or less like those many of us here knew for nearly half a century following World War II.

“You would have to be convinced that competition among imperialist rivals, as well as with more economically advanced semicolonial powers, is diminishing and profit rates, which have been on a downward trend since the early 1970s, are now going to begin to ascend for several decades on an accelerated curve,” she said. “That such a reversal can be accomplished without the massive destruction of productive capacity—human and physical—wrought by decades of war, including the interimperialist slaughter of World War II that was necessary for the capitalist rulers to get out of the last great world financial crisis and economic depression.”



Militant/Ben O’Shaughnessy

Discussion during November 10 session of forum on “United States: A possible revolution” at Venezuela Book Fair. At microphone, Tufara Waller, coordinator of cultural program of Highlander Center in Tennessee. Panelists at table are Eva Golinger, author of *The Chávez Code*; moderator Luis Bilbao, an Argentine journalist; and Mary-Alice Waters, member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee and president of Pathfinder Press.

Developing working-class vanguard

The economic crisis of capitalism drives the bosses’ offensive against the working class in the United States, Waters said, and these assaults are generating resistance. She pointed to the mass street mobilizations on May Day the last two years demanding legalization for undocumented immigrants as evidence of the beginning development of a working-class vanguard.

She said the mobilization of tens of thousands against racist injustice at the hands of the cops and courts in Jena, Louisiana, in September was “the first national action of its size and character in decades” and “was undoubtedly nourished by the power of the recent May Day mobilizations.”

In this context, Waters said, “The lessons of the Russian Revolution and the Communist International under Lenin will be sought after once again,” as will the real history of the Cuban Revolution, “as new generations of vanguard fighters search for previous historical experiences from which they can learn not only how to fight but how to fight *to win*.”

“How has it been possible,” she said, “for the Cuban people to hold at bay the most powerful empire history has ever known—or ever will know—for almost 50 years? Why to this day does Cuba remain the only free territory of the Americas?”

In her remarks Golinger said, “I have to disagree that Cuba is the only free territory of the Americas. Because here in Venezuela we are also free, or we are in the process of freeing ourselves.” She said the government-supported constitutional amendments will pass in a December 2 referendum vote here despite a campaign by the pro-imperialist opposition, pointing to this as an example of how “we are freeing ourselves with the enemy living in the same house.”

Golinger also said she didn’t “share the same optimism that a revolution is possible in the United States.” Golinger, who has lived in Venezuela since 1999, said that in preparing for the book fair she had spoken “with Noam Chomsky about how the process of change will have to be very slow in such a capitalist consumer society.”

People in the United States are deadened to conditions of suffering, Golinger said, because “it’s very easy to change the channel. People are not poor or hungry in the U.S. like they were in Venezuela. You get two or three credit cards in the mail every day. There is poverty, but it’s only in a few small sectors.”

As for the movement for legalization of immigrants, Golinger said, “Even though they were demanding to be recognized, it was to live inside a capitalist consumer society.

“The only way to achieve structural change in the United States is to make advances here” in Venezuela, she said. “Then we can go there and say, ‘Look at the Bolivarian Revolution, what we’ve accomplished. You can do the same.’”

Issues are joined

The two presentations were followed by a lively discussion. The issues presented on the opening day have been

Continued on page 7

Pathfinder sales at the Venezuela book fair

In the first three days of the Venezuela International Book Fair, participants staffing the Pathfinder booth sold 221 books and pamphlets along with 40 copies of the *Militant*. The highest-selling Pathfinder book is *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, with 42 copies so far. Other popular titles included: *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* (24 copies); the issue of the Marxist magazine *New International* with the article “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” (22); and two collections of speeches by Thomas Sankara—*We Are the Heirs of the World’s Revolutions* (14) and *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* (10). Pathfinder volunteers have sold these books while at the same time participating in the panel discussions and debates at the fair.

27,000 peasants march for land in New Delhi

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Some 27,000 landless peasants arrived October 28 in India's capital city, New Delhi, after a 26-day, 200-mile march north from Gwalior. Those at the front of the three-mile long procession carried a banner reading, "Land. Water. Forest."

Rural workers from 18 of India's 29 states marched on the capital. They included newly landless peasants as well as long-dispossessed toilers such as dalits (so-called untouchables) and members of indigenous tribes known as adivasis.

Organizers called for "a national authority to oversee land reform and a system of fast track courts to deal with the long delays in resolving land disputes," the BBC reported. The protest was organized by the United Forum, which describes itself as a Gandhian organization.

Capitalists and landlords, backed by government authorities, have driven hundreds of thousands of subsistence farmers off their land in recent years. The government has established "Special Economic Zones" offering tax breaks to set up factories and businesses, which has accelerated the dispossession of peasants.

Farmers protested bureaucratic obstacles to the resolution of land disputes, and politicians who swindle rural toilers into giving up their land for a pittance.

As the marchers arrived in New Delhi, two people were shot at a demonstration in West Bengal against plans to dispossess peasants living on 9,000 acres of land to build a chemical plant.

A large deployment of cops detained marchers in a gated area in the city and blocked them from reaching the parliament building. "The city's police force had instructions to keep the capital spruce for visiting dignitaries," reported the *Financial Times*, "among them Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, Henry Paulson, U.S. Treasury secretary, and dozens of chief executives in town for a lavish conference" organized by *Fortune* magazine.

The day after the marchers arrived, newspapers were flooded with the news that Mumbai's Sensex stock market index had hit a new high of 20,000. "The first 10,000 took over 20 years. The next came in just 20 months. Superpower 2020?" gushed the front-page headline of the *Economic Times*.

While a tiny minority of wealthy families have benefited from India's economic boom, conditions for the vast majority in city and countryside have worsened.



Tauseef Mustafa/Stringer

Peasants rally November 3 in New Delhi following 26-day march from the central city of Gwalior to demand land reform. Hundreds of thousands of subsistence farmers have been dispossessed by capitalists and landlords in recent years.

Some 72 percent of India's 1.1 billion people live in rural areas. More than 400 million people lack access to electricity, especially in the countryside. The World Bank estimates that 600 million cook with wood and other forms of "biomass" while 275 million depend at least partially on food, forage, fuel, and other products collected in the dwindling forest lands.

Venezuela book fair: 'U.S., a possible revolution'

Continued from page 6

hotly contested at other book fair activities, too. Golinger's remarks reflect widely held opinions here that there is little hope for revolutionary change in the United States.

The majority of those speaking during the first round of discussion at the central forum expressed doubts at such a possibility. Several Venezuelan speakers said in various ways that living standards in the United States are too high for there to be resistance, or that people are brainwashed by capitalist-owned media.

Some participants from the United States offered a different view. "I don't consider myself to have been turned into an idiot," said Diógenes Abreu, a Dominican-born activist living in New York. "Nor do I consider the millions who live in the United States who oppose its policies to be idiots.

"But I also don't share all the optimism of Mary-Alice," Abreu said. "If, as she pointed out, fewer than 7.5 percent of private-sector workers are organized, and the working class has to be in the leadership of a revolution, how can you say it's possible sooner rather than later?"

"The people I work with have never read Noam Chomsky," said Tufara Waller from the Highlander Center. "They are people who are hungry, who understand that they have to fight to live." Many people in the United States don't have credit cards, Waller added. She pointed to working people in New Orleans still confronting the social disaster in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and tobacco farmers in North Carolina fighting to keep their land.

Two-party system

The discussion continued in the afternoon, kicked off by Waller and Chris Carlson. Originally from Colorado, Carlson has lived in Venezuela for the last three years.

"Many Venezuelans, including President Chávez, say that Bush is the problem," he said. "But Bush is not the problem. He is just a product of a system dominated by big corporations." Carlson showed a PowerPoint presentation documenting how both the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States are financed by the same major corporations.

Contenders for the Democratic and Republican party nominations for the 2008 presidential elections, Carlson said, present fundamentally the same perspectives: driving ahead with the war in Iraq, and maintaining the economic embargo against Cuba and hostility toward Venezuela. The candidates are now debating health care, he said, but none has any proposal other than to keep health care a money-making institution at the expense of the well-being of millions.

Waller described the history of the Highlander Center and its current projects to organize against environmental degradation, intolerable working conditions, and racism.

"If both parties are so dominated by the monopolies, why don't people rise up against them?" a Venezuelan participant asked Carlson. Referring to the idea often heard in left-wing circles in the United States that the 2000 election was stolen by Bush supporters in Florida, Carlson said the majority of people in the United States don't see it that way and "still consider it a legitimate government."

A young Venezuelan who just returned after living in the United States also took the floor during the discussion. He described the school he attended in a working-class area of Alabama. "The education system there is not about learning at all," he said. The young people he went to school with wanted to change society but didn't know how to begin.

"This forum is only the beginning of what will be several days of discussion on these themes," said program moderator Luis Bilbao, an Argentine-born journalist, at the conclusion of the program. The forum continues through November 13. The book fair closes November 18.

EDITORIAL

Martial law in Pakistan: a side of 'antiterror' war

The martial law crackdown in Pakistan is one more consequence of the U.S.-led "global war on terrorism." Despite growing instability there, Washington is pressing ahead with its wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and beyond. That includes the military operations along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

While the White House has urged Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to lift the state of emergency, it has said U.S. military funding for the regime, currently $80 million a month, will continue. Musharraf is an "indispensable" ally in the "war on terror," President George Bush declared.

Washington has relied on a strong military regime in Pakistan as a staunch ally to help prosecute the war against the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and allied forces. And for most of the 60 years since the British imperialists created Pakistan, the army has ruled that country. The U.S. rulers are concerned about any destabilizing effects of weakening its role.

But the imperialist war in the region, Islamabad's close ties to Washington, and the denial of basic democratic rights keep undermining support for Musharraf's rule. In recent months Washington has tried to draw bourgeois opposition leader Benazir Bhutto into a power-sharing deal with Musharraf to give the regime a veneer of civilian rule and more legitimacy—while demanding it take stronger actions to combat "terrorism."

To try to bolster its rule, the regime has suspended civil liberties, shut down media, and rounded up thousands, from opposition party figures to trade unionists. In face of sharp confrontations between security forces and protesters, Bhutto says she will scrap the proposed power-sharing pact and now calls for Musharraf to resign.

The crackdown in Pakistan further exposes the U.S. rulers' hypocritical claim that their "war on terrorism" is about expanding freedom around the world. In reality, their war drive is about redividing the world—its markets, natural resources, labor, and territory—at the expense of their rival predators in Europe and Japan.

The capitalist rulers are sowing instability from the unintended consequences of their war drive. Pakistan is only the latest example. Another such crisis is in northern Iraq, where to gain the support of Kurds and consolidate its control in that country, Washington has allowed a semiautonomous Iraqi Kurdistan, which in turn poses a threat to the neighboring Turkish and Iranian ruling classes in their efforts to quell the Kurdish struggles for self-determination.

While militarily strong, U.S. imperialism is not able to stabilize a world in which the lives of millions of working people are marked by increased turmoil caused by the capitalist system itself. The destabilizing consequences of the war drive will keep opening up space in the Middle East and South Asia for workers and peasants to organize; for oppressed nationalities to fight for self-determination; for women to challenge inequality; for advances in the separation of religious institutions from politics and the state. That process will continue to unfold on a world scale.

Toronto Cuban 5 conference

Continued from front page

nized attacks against Cuba from south Florida with the complicity of the U.S. government. Such terror attacks included a string of bombings of hotels in 1997, one of which killed an Italian tourist.

Conference participants discussed the recent success of a month-long series of events in North America, part of an international campaign in defense of the Cuban Five, which demonstrated greater openings today than ever before to broaden this campaign.

Those at the gathering decided to step up the campaign to demand that Washington grant visas for Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva to visit their husbands—Gerardo Hernández and René González, respectively—who for nine years have been prevented from seeing their loved ones.

They projected continuing to campaign for CIA-trained murderer Luis Posada Carriles—who today walks free on U.S. streets—to be extradited to Venezuela to stand trial for his violent attacks against Cuba over nearly five decades.

The conference also decided on organizing a "Week of Free the Five" actions as soon as a federal appellate court in Atlanta rules on an appeal filed August 20 by the attorneys of the Cuban Five.

The two-day meeting was preceded by a press conference at City Hall, addressed by Elizabeth Palmeiro, the wife of Labañino, and representatives of the three sponsoring organizations. Palmeiro was interviewed afterward for "As It Happens," a popular radio program.

Numerous successful events

At the opening session, participants reported on many recent events on behalf of the Cuban Five. Bill Sloan, an attorney from Montreal who defends refugees and immigrants, reported that a picket line is held in front of the U.S. consulate there every second Thursday.

Two participants from Washington, D.C., Banbose Shango, from the newly formed D.C. Metro Committee to Free the Cuban Five, and Sam Manuel, from the Socialist Workers Party, reported on successful activities organized in the U.S. capital, including a September 12 meeting of 175 at the Howard University Law School.

Sobukwe Shukura and Jacob Perasso reported on a broadly sponsored meeting in Atlanta on October 2. The event focused on Cuba's role in defeating invasions of Angola by the apartheid regime in South Africa in the 1970s and '80s. Three of the Cuban Five served as volunteer combatants in that war.

Another report highlighted an October 11 meeting in Calgary marking the 40th anniversary of the death in combat of Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara that also featured the defense of the Cuban Five.

Later in the conference, Ike Nahem from Cuba Solidarity New York announced plans for an East Coast Free the Cuban Five conference to take place in New York April 4–5.

Palmeiro and Leonard Weinglass, an attorney for the five Cubans, were featured speakers at a public rally held in Toronto's city hall as part of the conference.

"My husband is in prison," Palmeiro said, "because he refused to betray his country, his brothers in prison, or his principles. The Five represent the best of Cuban society and our revolution."

Weinglass reviewed the facts surrounding the conviction of the five and stressed the stakes in waging a public campaign in the months ahead as the defense awaits a decision on its appeal. Ernesto Sentí, Cuba's ambassador to Canada, also addressed the rally, among others.

Many at the conference were longtime activists in the defense of the Cuban Revolution, but others were attending such an event for the first time.

Rachel Cooper and Ian Jones came from Ladysmith on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. They said they plan to write articles for the local media and build support for the Cuban Five at Malaspina College where Cooper teaches.

Sofia Shank, 20, a student at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, told the *Militant* she was "glad to plug myself in to this longterm fight."

Ernie Mailhot contributed to this article.

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